

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the first (and only) full paragraph appearing on page 10 as follows:

Fig. 3 is a flow chart containing steps of an alternative etching process carried out pursuant to the principles of the invention. The etching process of Fig. 3 is prospective; i.e., it has not yet been practiced. Individually, each step may be performed through the use of conventional process techniques and materials well known to those having ordinary skill in the art. The most significant difference between the processes of Figs. 1 and 3 is polyimide type; the process of Fig. 1 uses ~~non-photosensitive~~ non-photosensitive polyimide while the process of Fig. 3 uses photosensitive polyimide. Accordingly, the process of Fig. 3 eliminates use of a photoresist layer over the polyimide (e.g., blocks 106-110 of Fig. 1). Like the process of Fig. 1, the process of Fig. 3 may be performed on any etchable material, as described above. Fig. 4A, for example, shows etchable material in the form of a silicon dioxide layer 404 which is disposed on the surface of a silicon substrate 402. These layers combine to form assembly 450. In the following description, assemblies 450-460 (Figs. 4A-4F) will be used to illustrate the process steps set out in Fig. 3.

Please replace the first (and only) full paragraph appearing on page 11 as follows:

After deposition, polyimide layer 406 is exposed through a standard lithographical mask, pursuant to block 308 in Fig. 3. Such exposure alters the molecular structure of layer 406 in selected areas pursuant to a pattern defined by the lithographical mask. This step is illustrated in Fig. 4C, which shows a portion of a lithographical mask 403 disposed above polyimide layer 406. As described above, mask 403 selectively controls exposure of an underlying photosensitive surface to ionizing radiation 408 (e.g., ultraviolet light or low-energy ~~x-rays~~ x-rays). A portion of radiation 408 is stopped by mask 403 while the remainder is allowed to pass through the mask and alter the underlying material pursuant to the pattern of the mask. In this case, radiation 408 is allowed to expose polyimide layer 406 at area 410. The radiation exposure dose may be determined empirically or set as recommended by the polyimide manufacturer.